
Kiautschou (not) Perfin Revisited

– or –

A Reminder to Use the Literature You Have at Hand

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In the January 2004 Bulletin (pg. 3) I ran a note about an auction lot submitted for publication by Christian Rueger. In that note I wrote “I can’t locate an apparent ‘chain’ pattern in my literature.” OOPS! A closer look was definitely in order here. In fact, not one but two closer looks were in order. While serendipity played a role in locating the information presented, a little thought would have helped. Here’s the teaser that should have led to some thinking: Kiautschou as a stamp issuing German colonial entity was directly related to what other country? And what country is a trading partner which might account for these items

The first hint that I should have looked closer was a note I found in the found in the July/August 1990, *Perfins Bulletin* (pg. 165) submitted by Dr. Tony Llewellyn-Edwards (member #2741). In this article (‘When is perfin not a perfin’) he showed as Figure 8 a ‘stamp’ with a pattern extremely similar (but not identical with) the pattern shown in the note under discussion. Dr. Edward’s explanation was as follows: “Figure 8 is not even a stamp – although unless you read Japanese it is hard to know, the lack of a country name is a guide. It is a seal from a cash registration envelope and the perforation is intended to weaken it so that it would be destroyed if the envelope was opened in transit.”

I missed the obvious in January – not only is there no country name on the ‘stamp’, there is no denomination nor any marking on the ‘stamp’ consistent with postal franking.

Subsequent to the publication of the note in January **Dave Coath** (#3722) sent the following illustration of a pattern similar to that shown in January – on a very different ‘stamp’.



And now comes the second bit of serendipity. I have been scanning the tons (yes literally tons) of paper that I moved to our new home so that I never have to move that much dead weight again! And as I was copying a catalog of Japanese revenues I happened to notice a familiar pattern of perforation. In fact there were five very similar patterns illustrated, along with a listing of the ‘stamps’ in which they occur. The catalog (Shimoura, M.; Furuya, K., eds. 1965. The standard catalog of the Japanese revenue stamps. Tokyo, Japan: Takata Club (Fuko Stamp Co.)) was filed (and forgotten) all along. All three ‘stamps’ (Llewellyn-Edwards’, that from January and the one above) and the different perfins in them are shown in this catalog. The patterns shown in this year’s PB are probably the two stamps identified as the first issue (late 1890s) of officially distributed “postal seals” used to seal “matter with declared value”. The item shown above has a red overprint (免) which indicates that it was “used for official matter”. Note that the lot described in the January issue was listed as having a ‘...value declaration 500 yen...’ The seal shown by Llewellyn-Edwards in 1990 is an eighth issue seal (1954).

Below are reproduced the patterns identified in the 1965 catalog. My best guess looking at pictures rather than the stamps is that #1 is seen above, #2 is in the seals shown in January, and #5 is in the seal shown in 1990.

1	2	3	4	5

After studying the original cover illustration from the auction catalog (I am not a postal historian!), it appears that the item was sent from Osaka to a sailor at Camp (Kurume) and, also, from review of the cover illustration, the value declaration was 5,000 yen. (not the 500 listed in the lot description)

I will be glad to e-mail the downloaded illustration of the cover to anyone who wishes it for reference or comment. It is far clearer than the B&W illustration in the January Bulletin

In summary, and in my words, what we have here appears to be an officially issued paper successor to sealing wax and signet rings.